

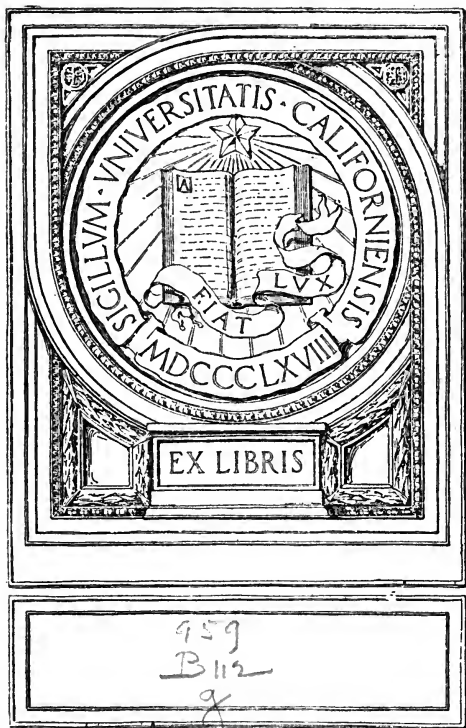
Greek Map Facers


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Edwina Stanton Babcock





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Greek Wayfarers

and

Other Poems

By
Edwina Stanton Babcock



G. P. Putnam's Sons
New York and London
The Knickerbocker Press
1916

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BY
EDWINA STANTON BABCOCK

TO MY
ALUMNI

The Knickerbocker Press, New York

To
MARIÁNTHE

359286

The author believes that Greece today—largely because of her people's opportunity in America—knows conscious renewal of her endless spirit while she still keeps wonder and glory for all who approach her.

Whatever her destiny, her natural beauties have not betrayed her, and through her glorious wildness and barrens her people are looking outward and forward. Therefore, if these verse-pictures of ancient and modern Greek life bring to those familiar with Greece any refreshing memory and to those who do not know this beautiful country an awakened interest, they will justify their existence.

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GREEK WAYFARERS



TO THE AMAZONS AT EPÍDAUROS

RIDE, Amazons, ride!

Militant women, careless of tunic and limb;
Sinuous torsos, naked legs boy-like and pressed
Close to the warm horse's flank, while the wild
battle-hymn

Fixes the eyes with the far-reaching look of the
quest;

Caring no more for the places of mother and
bride;

Ride, Amazons, ride!

Ride, Amazons, ride!

Arrow-swift warriors galloping over the plain,
Feverish, urged ever onward with furious rage;
War-fretted golden-hair tangled with wind-
fretted mane;

One-breasted heroines, vigorous, quick to engage,
Hot with the vigor of pulsating, vehement
pride—

Ride, Amazons, ride!

Ride, Amazons, ride!

Penthesilèa falls by Achilles' drawn bow.

Fell she, the Queen, by the white tents of bold
Priam's side?

4 *TO THE AMAZONS AT EPÍDAUROS*

Leaderless women, on to the battle ye go—
Plunging on, speeding on; galloping Vengeance,
 astride
Horses that feel ye victorious, with gods allied—
Ride, Amazons, ride!

Ride, Amazons, ride!
Fearless stone-women, ardent and flushed with
 the race,
Gleaming like swords, ruthless of body and
 breast;
Nothing shall utterly quell ye, nor wholly deface,
Ye shall ride onward forever, on ultimate quest.
Spirited! Splendid! Time shall not turn ye
 aside.
Ride, Amazons, ride!

THE BLACK SAIL

How did it seem, that warm thyme-scented day
When emerald figs hung swelling in the dark
Rose-nippled glooms of laurel and of bay,
And pomegranate flowers burned their spark
Through cypresses, to wait 'neath temple frieze,
Scanning the hermlless highways of the seas,

Watching for one white canvas far away,
And when the morning seemed to grow so late,
Going, amaracus and grapes to lay
With reeds and gums on Nike's stylobate,
Muttering: " 'Tis the Day—he cannot fail!"
Then on a sudden, seeing—the black sail!

WIDOWED ANDROMACHE

“FULL in the morning sun I saw him first
And followed him through meadows, flower-
massed,
All his steep, toilsome ways, I, too, traversed;
After his battles all his wounds I nursed,
From our tent gazing to the cities passed.

“Then, to the Trojan walls, where battle burned
And every altar had a bloody rim,
I trod his ardent footsteps, though I yearned
For fields so free; but until back he turned
My only way was onward, after him.

“The summons came while I was following, true,
Eager, alert, though bruised by thorn and stone.
Had he but paused to tell me, ere he drew
His cloak about him, what I was to do,
I would have kept the path, yea, all alone!

“But he was silent, answering not my woe.
He muffled him against my prayers and tears.
I raise my arms, hung with the links of years,
Hung with his broken chains, my right to show
But—o'er his Unknown Paths, I may not go!”

THE SACRED SHIP FROM DELOS

(The Pilot speaks)

"STRANGE, how I felt the homeward voyage
long;

As I looked back to Delos o'er our wake,
And heard the priest's song, saw our sails
out-shake

Under the round sun hanging like a gong
Mid-heaven. All night long I lay on deck
Remembering how he taught us in the Porch;
Yet, the black waters' phosphorescent torch
Gave me no Sign, no word in white foam-fleck.

"When we passed Sunion, methought I saw
Red fires burning 'mid the holy white
Of sacred columns; but the Athenian law
I did not know! And then, the reef's long jaw
Foamed at us. Through the hollow night
We fared, unwitting; putting forth our might;
Speeding with oars our fated way upon,
Till the white Dawn ensilvered Phaleron.

"At the Piræus, when I saw the throng,—
Crito and Phædo, there, to meet us,—I
Gave myself no portentous reason why,

8 THE SACRED SHIP FROM DELOS

But thought: 'He's free!' (Forsooth he did no
wrong)

Then I remembered lofty words he said
Of freedom as its dangerous truth he read,—
Great Zeus! The cowards might as well indict
Sea-circled priest or mountain anchorite!

"Crito it was who told me, voice all raw
With grief, and on my shoulder his kind hand:
He saw me flinch,—'Tremblest?' he said,
'Nay, stand

Here in the shadow. 'Twas *thy* ship they saw,
The Sacred ship from Delos, ere they gave
The signal for the hemlock—and his grave!
He drank the cup: the while, methought, thy
prow

Would have steered Hades-ward, didst thou but
know.'

"I made no sign. No trite word left my lip.
I turned from Crito, and saw Phædo, grave,
Join him. Alone, I went back to my ship,
Sails furled with garlands riding harbor-wave;
I looked at her, rehearsed the sacred rite,
And purified me; set my torch alight:
'Socrates! Master!' I sobbed once; set then
Aflame the Sacred Ship of Ill-Omen!"

THE LITTLE SHADE

No longer that grey visage fix,
Charon,
Asking me how I come to mix
With this pale boat-load on the Styx,
Charon.

I am so very small a Shade,
Charon,
Holding the vase my father made
And toys of silver all inlaid,
Charon.

Ferry me to the golden trees,
Charon,
To isles of childish play and ease
And baths of dove-like Pleiades,
Charon.

Ferry me to the azure lands,
Charon,
Where some dead mother understands
The lifting of my baby hands,
Charon.

THE CONTRAST

"Neither my Magnesian home, nor Demetrias, my happy country mourned for me, the son of Sotimos; nor did my mother Soso lament me,—for no weakling did I march against my foes."—*From a painted stele at Volo, Thessaly.*

'Tis said, when young Greeks went to die,
Greek mothers would not weep;
And steadfast mien and tearless eye
Controlled themselves to keep.

Ah!—they were trained to bloody deed;
We—in this time so late
That life seemed gentle, know our breed
More tragically great!

Had we foreseen, no tear would fall.
Now mothers, too, could smile . . .
Only, we proved men brave . . . and dead
In such a little while!

“SHE HAD REVERENCE”

“O Rhadamanthos, or O Minos, if you have judged any other woman as of surpassing worth, so also judge this young wife of Aristomachos and take her to the Islands of the Blessed. For she had reverence for the gods and a sense of justice sitting in council with her. Talisos, a Cretan city, reared her and this same earth enfolds her dead; thy fate, O Archidike!”—*From a painted stele in the Museum at Volo.*

THE dear dead women Browning drew
Lean forth in happy watchfulness;
With them Rossetti's Starry-tress:
And Tennyson's royal maidens press
To bring you to their Sacred Few.
Lovely companions wait for you,
Dear *Archidike*, wife divine,
With asphodels your locks to twine;
Thus crowning with celestial vine
That noble reverence you knew!

THE GLORY

Good Friday Night, Athens, 1914.

MYRIAD candles windy flaring
Over faces stilled in prayer;
Silken banners, icon-bearing,
Jewelled vestments, laces rare—
All the people in a daze,
Walking in a candle-haze,
Of uplifted pure amaze.
All the people in a stream,
Crowding in an Easter dream;
While choragic song
Pours from out the throng—
“It is the Glory—holy holiday.”
So, smiling, good Athenians say.

Priests in choir, softly singing,
Carry the Pantokrator,
While the city-bells are ringing
In their wild two-toned uproar;
All the people, in a mass,
With the purple-robed Papas,
Bearing crosses made of brass,

Scarlet cap, and fustanelle,
Turkish fez, and bead, and bell,
While choragic song
Leads the trancèd throng.
"It is the Glory—holy holiday,"
So, smiling, good Athenians say.

Colored lights, and dripping torches,
Burn on Lykabettos crags;
In the narrow streets and porches
Whole-sheep roasting never flags.
Bonfires all the country light,
Up to dark Hymettus' height,
Making all the hillsides bright.
Still the surging crowds advance,
Moving, moving in a trance;
While choragic song
Leads the trancèd throng.
"It is the Glory—holy holiday,"
So, smiling, good Athenians say.

In their wistful majesty,
See them waiting for a sign,
Of religious unity
From the human or divine;
Faithful, yearning, poor, uncouth,
Pagan-born, yet craving truth—
Old grey-heads and stripling youth.
All the people in a stream,
Holding candles in a dream,

While choragic song
Swells throughout the throng.
"It is the Glory—holy holiday,"
This, smiling, good Athenians say.

SUNSET ON THE ACROPOLIS

If ever I have freed me of all time,
Let me so free me now, that I have brought me
Near to these hill-top temples, which have
 caught me
Up to their soaring heights and Vision wrought
 me
Of things serene, and stricken, and sublime.

Let me, the titled, spurious Christian, face
This solemn wistfulness of Pagan yearning—
This aspiration of white columns, burning
With golden fires, their pillars deep inurning
The tragic, sunset beauty of the place.

Let me stand silent, under evening skies,
Watching this radiance grown cold and hoary;
In death-white, black-stained ruins, read the
 story
The Parthenon tells of ancient Grecian glory,
Reiterating beauty as it dies.

Let me stand silently and humbly, there,
Seeking that Unknown God Greeks apprehended;
That, as the temples fade, and day is ended,
My own hope with this ancient faith be blended,
And I be part of this eternal prayer!

THE STREET OF SHOES

(Athens)

Now, while the Bulgars creep in stealthy crews
To Macedonian borders, do they stay
In Athens as they were one April day—
The busy cobblers in "The Street of Shoes"?

I wonder: for the faces leaning there,
Had Oriental heat, the hands that sewed
Had look of readiness; some skillful code
The hammers rapped on leather-scented air.

The old shoemakers, hung about with hide
In cave-like booths, with beads and fringe adrip,
Muttered their restless words beneath the clip
Of shoe-laces, or hammered, sombre-eyed;

Red-capped, white-bearded, keen for petty strife,
They hammered and they stitched; while, might
and main

Down their small, narrow, red-morocco lane,
They cut the scarlet shoes with gleaming knife.

How would it go, if mad Bulgarian hordes
Invaded here with pillage and abuse?
I like to think that in the Street of Shoes
Those old, gnarled hands would fiercely leap to
swords!

I love to think how fiery faces there
Would light like lurid skies before the storm,
And that Athenian shoemakers would swarm
To guard the city with ferocious care.

Then, if the foe to trample Athens choose,
I pity them if those Greek cobblers still
Stick to their lasts. These would not wait to
spill
A brighter red than red-morocco shoes!

Bulgars would know how nimble fingers use
Flayed skin to keep the needles very bright;
They would learn much before they took their
flight
Forever from the valiant Street of Shoes!

ON THE ELEUSINIAN WAY—SPRING

HUSH! Walk slowly;
All this winding road is holy;
Place your votive image in a niche
By Pass of Daphne, where rocks forward pitch.
Now, sit lowly—
Under dim firs that cool the dust-white way
Curving from Athens to Eleusis Bay.

Soft! Speak lightly!
See'st this myriad Concourse? all the sprightly
Luminous Mystæ? Naked flower forms
Dancing in close commingled color-swarms
So brightly?
Follow them in their green-hot Mænad flame,
Their sweet mysterious rapture of no name.

Watch! Far-seeing
Demeter's yellow torches fitful fleeing.
And seed processions moving towards the shrine
Where motion, moisture, act in soft sunshine;
And being
Earth-taught, flower-figures of desire
Sway toward white Oreads quick with fire.

ON THE ELEUSINIAN WAY—SPRING 19

Take, unceasing
Joy of powers these Mystæ are releasing
Eternal, they, who seem so lovely-brief.
Soft luminous shapes of petal and of leaf
Increasing,
They sweep across Semele's ancient fields
Handing the torch the calm Earth-mother
yields.

Yea—the senses
Have their holy truths and recompenses
Sweetly simple may their teachings be
“Wine flashing clusters from a sacred tree”;
Defences
From all our sorry wisdoms have these flowers
Who teach deep truths with Dionysiac powers!

IN THE ROOM OF THE FUNERAL STELÆ

(Athens Museum)

O'ER all the world I wandered with my grief,
My human grief, that would not be forgot,
Finding no face, no word, nor any spot
Where haunted heart and brain could find relief.

Until the morning I unwitting stept
Into the stelæ-halls and the great peace
Of the Greek sorrow over Life's surcease
Enveloped me, even in woe inept.

Here, marble love in simple human sense
To nearest friend gives earthly treasure up,
A matron handing maid a box or cup;
A man from dog and slave turning him hence;

A soldier springing out into the dark;
A wife slow fading in her husband's arms;
The inexorable Fact, its vague alarms
And Love grown suddenly aloof and stark!

Yet no breast-beating here, nor frantic woe,
Nor bitter tears, nor loud outcry of pain.
Only the question: "Will they live again?
Go they forever from us, when they go?"

THE ROOM OF THE FUNERAL STELÆ 21

Majestic sorrowers the figures stand,
Absorbed in contemplation of One Thing . . .
No promises, nor priestly counselling,
Only the longing eyes and clasping hand!

Down the long halls I wandered; Athens' Spring
Radiant without, with almonds' rosy spray,
And violets crowding on the hills. That day
My dead heart stirred to marble comforting!

For the Greeks *knew* ! Death is the only thing
That keeps its dignity. So Death they met
Ready to pay to him a subject's debt;
Going out awe-struck as to meet a King.

The Greeks *knew* ! nothing any more can heal
The heart Death once despoils of sorrowing.
With proud simplicity they felt the sting,
Then wore the mystery like sacred seal!

Calm-eyed, controlled, those marble figures
gaze
Into the depths no mortal eyes have known,
Then, Grecian head thrown back, the world is
shown
Sorrow's transfigured face, immortal ways!

“THE SEVEN-STRINGED MOUNTAIN LUTE”

“Homer, Sappho, Anacreon, Pindar, Æschylus, Sophocles, Euripides, the very names are a song.”—M. C. M.

I KNEW, no matter how they plucked at me
Like golden fingers—all those cadenced names—
That never could I answer; for the power
Of their majestic harmonies was perfect flower.
No greater song, nor lovelier verse could be
Unless Greece lived another golden hour.
I tried to echo them. I vainly sought
Timid expression of their rhythmic fire;
My melodies with halting effort caught
Faintly their classic motive and desire.
Yet, while I failed, a miracle was wrought,
Themselves did sing! Thus, humble, I' was
taught
These names that are the plectrum and the lyre.

GREEK WAYFARERS

I

AROUND the Hellenic coast the dark-blue bands
Of circling waters, like a loin-cloth, wind
The stalwart nakedness of seaward lands;
Bronze crag, and beach, and rock and terrace
bind

As foreground for the somber swelling tent
Of purple mountain. On the morning sky
Pale azure summits, with their sides snow-rent,
Loom in the distance; slowly, solemnly,
The coasts of Greece define; their misty chains
Backed by soft clouds and silver sky-moraines.
While we sail on, reverent vision-sharers,
To read the romance of the Greek Wayfarers!

II

Those serrate ridges toward the southward brew
Grape-colored mist, snow-frothed; the foamy
crest
Of Mount Taygetos bursts on the blue
Peloponnesian pinnacles, repressed

Back of fair bays and coasts. Rich lands of
corn,

"Slopes that the Spartans loved," the Headlands
Three

Hide from the eye; but nearer shores forlorn
Wounded and Ancient, scarred of rock and tree
Looming beyond the starry-clustered Isles,
Where fire-blue waters surge on circled strand,
Lead to far cliffs, which once were beacon-
bearers

In early wars, for early Greek Wayfarers.

III

Each azure-rippled, rock-encrusted beach
Tells of the dusky, strong Phœnician sails
That came from Sidon, passed the stormy reach,
And touched at islands, dark as wave-tossed
bales

Left floating in the murex-stained sea
Where restless fishers, full of dawning schemes
Cruised in the tunny waters; sailing free,
Drawn by the Tyrian Purple to new dreams.
Adventurers, traders, heard the sailor-boasts
Of civilized beginnings on the coasts,
And in black vessels brought the new Space-
Darers

Whose reckless sea-paths made them Greek
Wayfarers!

IV

Thus rovers came, and dark-skinned traders
planned
New villages by fertile pasture lures
In lonely valleys; by succeeding hands
Minoan vases, Mycenean ewers
Were fashioned; then the tribes fought hill by
hill,
And coast by coast, for wealth, till Knossos'
tombs
And Tiryns' palaces had dawning skill
Of goldsmith and of craftsman in their glooms.
The legends grew, the wooden statues raised
New, mystic Cults. Where rams and young kids
grazed
Distaffs sprang up, and primitive sheep-shearers
Brought snowy fleece to clothe the Greek Way-
farers.

V

Delphi, Eleusis, guided human awe
By mystic voices and by legend thrill;
Then, one by one, came templed porch and floor
Gleaming by sea or on some fir-crowned hill.
Far back in forest, or on Islands, rose
Transcendent loveliness of chiselled stone,
And in the secret shrine Artemis chose
To hear, or not to hear, the victim's moan.

The entrails burned; worshippers at the feet
Of Gold-Apollo knew the saving-sweet
Comfort of God-in-life, evolved from terrors
Of Nature-forces by the Greek Wayfarers.

VI

And then the restless ichor in Greek veins
Created dreams of new posterity,
And mother-cities planning greater gains
Sent emigrants exploring on the sea.
Before Ionians, strange Æolians went.
To Chalcedon came "œkist" altar-fire;
Silver, and iron, and flax, for commerce sent
Dorians roving with renewed desire;
And coins and woollens, pottery and dyes,
Marked with age-seal each eager new emprise;
And shrines and temples followed all the eras
Of settled colonies of Greek Wayfarers.

VII

To vale and coppice, every forest place,
Came note of Syrinx and the sound of flutes;
And golden ball and pomegranate trace
On priestly robes; and 'mid the cool volutes
Were public treasures heaped; the Councils met;
Athens and Corinth grew to haughty names,
And glorious youths and lovely boys were set
To daring deeds at the Olympic Games.

By mountain paths and solitudes they trod,
They set the votive offerings to their god
Invoking glory—happy olive-wearers—
Consciously beautiful, as Greek Wayfarers.

VIII

Then sculptors wrought and painters ground the
 crude
Colors, and potters found the yellowish glaze;
And out of Cretan bowls and bottles rude
Came polychrome and monographic vase.
The echoing, marble theatres curved in hills,
Where master-voices, with dramatic art,
Chorused all joys and passions, and all ills—
And touched with deep emotion every heart,
Till poet-minds flowered to richer truth;
Forsaking earlier thoughts and laws uncouth,
With nobler aim to be the way-preparers
Of philosophic thought for Greek Wayfarers.

IX

While every river mothered daughters fair,
And clouds conceived, and ancient trees enslaved
Satyr and hama-dryad . . . then the flare
Of the Greek torch too happy-high was waved—
The jealous East was plotting, Persians lay
In plundering splendor, with their blazing hosts,
Till Marathon and grim Thermoyplæ. . . .
Then, envious cities, roused at Athens' boasts

Of glittering power, crushed the Golden Age.
Under the Spartan and Boeotian rage;
"Leagues" and sea-struggles, Macedonian ter-
rors,
Dragged to a desperate pass the Greek Wayfarers.

X

Yet after Byzantine and Ottoman
Settled despotic heel upon the land,
No cruel Venetian yoke nor Turkish ban
Forced the brave Greeks' unconquerable stand.
Outsiders saw the Cause inviolate,
Byron's hot poet's heart and cosmic brain
Urged on the struggle, to once more create
An independent Greece, unchained again.
The whole world watched the piteous battle
fought,
And hailed small triumphs, passionately bought
With faith, until, from wild, despairing errors,
The struggling Greeks once more were Greek
Wayfarers.

XI

Now on Greek highways, where the wagons roll,
Piled high with wineskins, or with bags of flour,
Past schools and churches and the fountain bowl,
New hope springs in the peasants hour by hour.

Greeks know that through their sordid modern
 strife

They walk in poetry, believing well
They are the children of enchanted life,
That sends them forward messages to tell
Of Greek restraint and hospitality,
Greek love of beauty, and Greek dignity,
Making them, in their toil, devoted carers
For new and better goals for Greek Wayfarers.

XII

What are the goals to be, and what the gain?
As soldiers camp in valley and on hill
Do Spartan youths leap on the dusty plain?
Does spirit of Leonidas keep still
One death-defying purpose? Will the blood
Leap of a sudden out of the Soros,
And Marathon with bright phalanxes flood?
Do all Greeks bear the title *agathos*?
Ah, Greece! Ah, Greece! dare for the precious
 Past,
And throw your lot with gallant men that cast
Eternal die, to be the Spirit-Bearers
For all the world and all the Greek Wayfarers.

THE THRESHING-FLOOR

"This mess of hard-kneaded barley-bread and a libation mixed in a little cup."—*Greek Anthology*.

THERE'S a white stone-paven floor
Set in a jade-green field
Where the spiked acacias yield
A shadow, and the four
Earthen pots on a round well-wheel
Come up dripping full and spill
Where the white horse runs his circle round
Drawing water for garden ground.

The white foundation here
Has ne'er held temple-plinth,
But mint and terebinth
Perfume is in the air.
And here, at the harvest-time the wains
Rattle along the sunburnt plains,
And the peasant's arms are bared to thresh
Food from the golden barley mesh.

Before the morning's long
Comes drowsy, sliding snatch
Of primitive threshing-song;
Down in the garden patch

The murmurous sleepy drone of bees
Blends with the stir of the poplar-trees,
And the rustle of bundled grain
Tossed from the wagon train.

Ah! the *Mavrodaphne* wine
Is fruity and sweet to taste,
And the oranges are fine
And the blocked Loukoúmi paste.
But I long for a crust of peasant bread
Eaten with honey from Parnes' head,
And I hunger the more and more
At sight of the threshing-floor!

BY THE WALLACHIAN TENTS

THE BOY

OVER dripping washing-trough
Bends my mother busy drubbing,
Father's fustanella rubbing
With the dark soap, smeary—rough.
There my goats go, wild careering
From the sound of wagons, nearing.
Oootz—Ella—Whooff—!
Out of there, you silly kid,
By the old soup-kettle hid.

THE MOTHER

That boy, lying in the thyme,
Sheepskinned loafer in the grasses,
He is carelessness sublime,
Sunned in yellow iris masses.
Thinks he of the dead men sleeping
Far away from flocks he's keeping,
Piled in bloody mountain-passes?
With the brutal guns again
Booming: "Give us men! More men!"

THE BOY

Baby hanging from the tree,
Peeps from out his bright bag-hollows,
While the white dog rolls and wallows
Bitten by an angry bee.
Forth for those sheep he must sally,
Where they by the cold brook dally.
Oootz—Ella—Deee!—
Now the fools, in silly mass,
Scamper toward the mountain-pass.

THE MOTHER

Far off, on the dusty plain,
Reels my drunk Wallachian,
Coming up from town again.
Drinking in the village khan,
All our Balkan coin he's spending;
As his stupid way he's wending
I the future scan.
Ugh! I hear those guns again
Surly—growling: "Men! More men!"

THE BOY

Swift the smooth Peneios flows
Smoky-white to sea's blue gleaming.
Where the battleships are steaming
Ready for their foes,

I should like to fight and bear me
Fiercely. Nothing there would scare me.
Ella—Ella—Pros!
With this high-swung shepherd-stick
That old bucking ram I'll hit!

THE MOTHER

St. Spiridion! He beats
That old ram as 't were his woman!
What a fine, big, brawny human
Have I suckled at these teats!
Ah! I have my mother-reasons
To distrust Rumanian treasons,
When our Council meets.
Bah! those dirty guns again
Booming: "Give us men! More men!"

When my man comes, o'er and o'er
I will bluster—Not will hunger
Nor your beatings make me monger
Sons to angry war.
That brown boy, in sunshine dreaming,
I'll not feed him to the teeming
Snorting cannon-maw!
Move we now our tents again,
Far from guns that roar: "More men!"

THE VALE OF TEMPÉ

THE river that winds through the Vale of Tempé
is white,

Smokily white, like water opaque with a charm,
Olympus knows why. He towers there, frostily
bright,

And Ossa forth stretches a slaty, precipice
arm,—

Deepening silvery pools into green-clouded
light,—

So that Tempé is hidden and secret and free
from alarm.

But the green Vale of Tempé leads forth to the
stir of the Sea

Where the battleships growl and where Salonica
is held

Fast in the grip of the Powers, who fight for the
key

Unlocking the Border-doors; if Tempé were
shelled,

Then the white Pencios, veiled as for bridal,
would be

Scarlet with blood of soldiers. like forests felled.

Pindar, Spenser, Shelley, Byron,—ye bards—

Lyric-tongued all! What if the fair Tempé
glade,

Where delicate flowers gleam on the virginal
swards

And the cuckoo pipes to the shy-footed dryad-
maid

And the trees hide Daphne,—What if the horror-
mad hordes

Trample this Pastoral, where old Mythology
stayed?

They answer not and the soft Peneios is veiled,
'Mid the joy of the fauns and flowers and river-
born shade.

But an old Belief in the smoky-white water is
trailed—

Who knows but Apollo, fierce for his pagan
glade—

Will hasten, haughtily, in shining sun-armor
mailed,

And carry it off to the Greek gods' ambushade?

THE ENCOUNTER

'T WAS there in Tempé that he lay
Under a plane-tree, fast asleep,
His pipes far-flung.—Pan! growing gray;
Lines on his mocking face; his gay
Scuffling hoofs forgot to leap.

The river pleaded, "Wake the God";
The birds sat by with soft aside;
Up from the delicate spring-sod
I saw the eager flowers nod,
And little leaves my language tried.

I woke Pan. Bore the deep earth-gaze
On my false being, false to life
By all the dreary modern ways:
"Pan," I dared whisper—"long the days—
One needs thy music in the Strife"

"Full many a spring when poppies fired
This brook-side, did I play for you."
Pan answered me: "My music tired,
For colder music you desired;
So be it—I am weary, too!"

"Forgive me for my sad unworth,
Oh, patient Pan," I murmured low.
"I know that I have failed the earth;
Only, perhaps, by spirit-birth,
My children thy wild pipes will know."

Pan frowned: "Nay, all the world doth rave;
Against the Pipe; they rant, like you!
Go, people my deserted cave
With theories and books. Zeus save
That I should hinder what you do!"

Far back in Tempé's leafy glade
The dappled sunshine filtered through,
And dewdrops opalled every blade.
I was not of the god afraid.—
And still there was a thing to do.

"Ah, Pan, dear Pan," I softly cried,
"Who is it that shall save but thee?
Thy music, god, the whole world wide,
Is listened for on country-side,
And every dreamer bows the knee!"

"By musky grapes in rosy hands,
And all the golden fruits that glow,
A happy lover understands
Thy fluting, hearts in sober lands
Languish till they thy clear pipe know!"

“Ah, Pan—play on! Forgive the souls
Whom knowledge cheats of love; forgive
That life exacts its bitter tolls
And leads to artificial goals.

Oh! Play! that we may surelier live!”

I bent, I touched the shaggy hoof,
The horns; I looked into the eyes
Clear as rock pools, and yet aloof
Like wild bird's, then I saw the proof
That Pan is kind beyond surmise.

Tears! In Pan's eyes!—I sprang away
(Not even Pan should see me weep)—
Yet on through Tempé, all that day
I heard wild, happy piping.—Yea,
I wakened Pan!—He's not asleep!

EASTER DANCE AT MEGARA

FIRST PICTURE

GREEN lizards flash along the walls
Curd-white against the fire-blue bay;
The pepper-trees' fern branches sway
Their delicate, hot, scarlet balls.

The linkèd maidens wreathe the square,
Blazing with festal coinage, hung
On brown necks; yellow kerchiefs, flung
O'er dusky, long, twin braids of hair.

The Attic maids, with Attic mirth
Subdued and shy, from hill and plain,
On Easter holiday, at birth
Of spring, weave altar-pacèd chain.

And sing a song, to shepherd flute,
Its shifting, three-toned lilt is cold,
Only—it is so very old,
The wonder is it is not mute.

But so, they say, did maidens dance
In dim Eleusis, near the shrine.
And that is why these dark eyes shine
With classic-cultured ignorance.

And that is why, from near and far,
Greek peasants come with stately pride,
They know that Past from which they glide
Into the dance at Megara!

SECOND PICTURE

In his long smock, and farmer's cotton cap,
Demetri dances.
The old crones smile, the little children clap,
The young girls' glances
Follow him, tall and grave, and deep of eye,
Marvelling at him, yet aloof and shy;
His fellow-dancers jostle roughly by
With rude askances.

The piper plays his reediest, shrillest tune,
And at his leisure
Demetri, as though pacing in a rune,
Treads out a measure.
The elders laugh: "Dance there, fantastic
fellow!
Tread down the grapes, while harvest moon is
mellow,
Give thy feet wings, fly o'er the sunset billow
At thy good pleasure!"

The little glasses of brown resin-wine
Are quaffed; beads slipping
Through the Greek fingers, slender, brown, and
fine,
Accent his skipping.

42 *EASTER DANCE AT MEGARA*

They nudge, to see his hand curve on his shoulder,
They marvel as his dark eyes burn and smoulder,
And note his step less vague, his bearing bolder,
And go on sipping.

Around him dance the peasants, pacing slow
With rhythmic swinging,
But in and out he threads their simple show
'Midst childish singing.
Reels past old bearded Greeks, their grave tales
weaving,
And fierce Wallachians come for Easter thieving;
Albanian women with bold bosoms heaving
To children clinging.

Spell-bound, all watch him reel, and swerve, and
bend;
His dizzy spinning
Dazzles their eyes. Word goes from friend to
friend:
"He is beginning!"
For now with somber eyes, unveiled and burning,
From peasant dance they see Demetri turning
To an old trance of rapturous discerning—
Loud plaudits winning.

The sun shines paler on the kerchief's gold,
The church-bell's tolling;
The sea grows purple, and the distance cold,
With dark waves rolling.
The long lines break, the black-haired maidens
 wrangle;
With exclamation all the dusty tangle
Comes to a halt, 'mid glint of peasant spangle
And soft song trolling.

But tall Demetri lost in dreaming pace
In solemn swaying,
Keeps on alone, with tense and mystic face
As he were praying.
With hand upraised, as holding the caduceus,
He looks away to old far-off Eleusis,
Devising Dionysiac curves and nooses,
Old Laws obeying.

Why, in his face that mystic peering gaze
Like a faun, waiting?
Why does he pace his lonely, occult ways
His eyes dilating?
"Demetri!" "Mitchu!" tease the girls. Their
 screaming
He does not hear, lost in far other seeming,
In strange dance-spell, in old blood-tutored
 dreaming,
Old rhythms creating.

PEACE, 1914

WHY do the women walk so free and strong
In Thessaly?

It is because the Turks wreak no more wrong;
The Balkans ended, sunburnt soldiers throng,
In Thessaly.

Why do the old monks pray so hard for rain
In Thessaly?

It is because the mountain slopes again
Roll in green terraces of silver grain,
In Thessaly.

Why does the shepherd wear a brodered shirt
In Thessaly?

Because 'tis peace; clean is the goat-herd's skirt,
The women spin; the needles are alert,
In Thessaly.

And why the young kids, white as snowy curds,
In Thessaly?

The farmers are successful with their herds;
The highway's loud with guttural teamster-
words,

In Thessaly.

Why are the threshing-floors so thickly set
In Thessaly?

Because, when harvest comes, and youth is met,
Comes the old will of Nature, sturdy yet,
In Thessaly.

And these deserted hovels that we see
In Thessaly,
Where the Peneios winds about the tree?
The villagers have gone across the sea
From Thessaly.

And this trim town of plaster and of thatch
In Thessaly?
America hangs fortune on the latch,
Our sons come back, then blooms the garden
patch,
In Thessaly!

Then, this is no decadent race I see
In Thessaly?
Oh, stranger, who can tell? Hard things must
be.
Only, the "Greeks were Greeks," and Greeks
are we
In Thessaly.

DELPHI

MATRIXED 'mid purple mountain steeps,
An ancient Grecian city sleeps.
Where rock-hewn fountains spill
Down scarlet-poppied hill;
Long time ago its temples fair
Rose, Doric-columned, on the air,
And voices told of riddles strange
That echoed down the mountain range;
And men and cities brought their all
To Delphi and the priestess' thrall.
While in the mountain-pass a pipe
Played on and on and on—
A pipe played on.

Now up the aisles of olive-trees
Come wistful souls from over-seas,
From the Itean shore,
Past rose-hung cottage door,
And in the sacred fount they dip,
Or tell the lore with alien lip;
Or, dreaming, scan far snow-crowned heights,
Lit, as of old, with pagan lights.

While through the thyme, 'mid rock and pool,
The sheep-bells tinkle, water cool,—
And in the mountain pass, a pipe
Plays on and on and on—
A pipe plays on.

While glowworms blur the dewy gorse,
And stars float from their tidal source,
And Grecian peasants steal
By creaking wagon-wheel,
We ponder on this Life and Death
Within the taking of our breath;
So old, these ruined fanes that lie,
Beneath the temple of the sky!
So old these sacred stones that gleam
With the strange shining Delphic dream.
While in the mountain-pass the pipe
Plays on and on and on—
A pipe plays on.

So old, this silence trembles, brought
To solemn tension with our thought—
Deep as the mystic strain
Born in Apollo's fane:
"Dear God, 'tis well no Pythoness
For us may prophesy or bless!
Well, that no riddle-verse controls
The will that slumbers in our souls!
Well, that we choose, calm, clear-eyed, free

To live and learn our truth from Thee!"—
Still in the mountain-pass the pipe
Plays on and on and on—
The pipe plays on.

THE DESCENT FROM DELPHI

DAWN, pallid and cold,
Parnassos, grave in the mist
Like the shrouded form of a priest;
No light in the East,
Save thin stars, worn and old.

Under the "Shining Ones"
The temple-steps, in white,
Chromatic, gleaming, light,
Mount to the stadion's
Oval of crumbling stones.

Dawn, stealthy and still,
Frostily fills the fields,
Dew sprinkles the maize;
Where ranging cattle graze,
His pipe a shepherd plays.

Sun, striking the snow
On far off mountain height,—
Day, solemn and slow,
Rises from Long Ago
Clothed in pure samite.

A scarlet rug in a field;
A man and a woman asleep—
Around them, dogs and sheep,
Where the maize is quivering gold,
As the broad day is unrolled.

The man and the woman asleep—
Alone in the Delphian field!
And the world, once more revealed
Young, and all time is healed
The Oracle unsealed!

TWILIGHT ON ACRO-CORINTH

FROM the Venetian arch, the doubting owl
Sends forth his whimper; where the sheep-dogs
 lope

Sounds donkey's thirsty octave, call of fowl,
And near green-silver maize and popped slope,
Goat-bells ring jangling on the tether-rope
As, truant from some hooded shepherd's scowl,
Dim, hornèd shapes in black thyme-bushes grope.

I look four ways down all the rich descents
To mountain, cliff, and sea. First to the South
Where Argolis in purple permanence
Gives sumptuous breast to dark sea's hungry
 mouth.

Enthroned in mountain fastness, warm, immense,
Or, lying prone by misty olive-fence
Losing herself in languid, dusty drouth.

Far Eastward, islanded Ægina keeps
Her tree-girt shrine, and Sunion the prow
Of white sea-temple lifts on Laurion steeps
Where mines are hid, and silver quarries show.
Then, like a bee, the eager eye upsweeps
To Athens, where the Acros-flowers grow
And the dim road to far Eleusis creeps.

I look toward Athens, over golden gorse,
Purple anemones, Saronic seas,
Powerful, kingly blue. I see the source
Of all Mind ever was, and then the trees
Blurring, I turn me West, perforce
Sweeping Arcadian ridges, as light flees
And over paling skies cloud-horses course.

Boeotia, Phocis, Lokris ranges tread
Vast gorges 'round the Gulf's imperial shores;
Like citadels, their summits, thunder-bred,
And at their feet are sacred river-floors,
And many a mountain stream its crystal bed
Has hidden beyond those labyrinthine doors
From whence down winds the clue-like glancing
thread.

And as the night surrounds me and the stars
Climb up the clouds like mountain-pastured
flocks,
I muse on Progress, that which hurts and scars
Nature with blood, machines, and battle-shocks.
But, as I gaze, the whole wild sky unbars
War's end portending; the new time unlocks
Ultimate peace no human passion mars.

ROMANCE

THE "wine-dark" sea menaces as of old,
When young Odysseus dared; and all our ship
Shudders against the midnight mountain-waves
Hurrying to crush the steamer, in her plunge
On black path, under wind-blown scattered
stars.

Strange is the contrast! Strange it is to lie
Cabined and berthed, feeling like crystal, hid
In a night-moving mountain; thence to see
At port-hole's glimmer, land, solemn and strange!
Old as all prayers, all vigils, and all hope!
As the ship stops at Patras, and bells ring,
To look out on the mole-lights, red and white,
And see the black, unreadable night-shore.
And then, to lie back, ponder the mystery
Of that one man—that little ugly man—
Reviled, unknown, and unbelieved, who burned
So fiercely with his message, that he sailed
From port to port, to give it. My age boasts
Its Christian ethics cool expedience.
That age, simply knew a man named "Paul,"

Who fought with beasts, endured the stripes, .
to give

His flaming, tender, strong epistles; wrote
To the people, as 'twixt starvings and ship-
wrecks

He sailed these waters, from the "upper coasts."

NIGHT IN OLD CORINTH

A HILL trembling with grain
And a winding path.
Shadowy sheep on the slopes;
The sound of bells and sea,
The sound of a peasant song,
The sound of pipe and drum . . .
And in the twilight grey
Apollo's temple.

Wide doors and the cottage fire,
Bright coffee-coppers; plates
Of white curds and of fish;
A man in a scarlet cap,
Turning a roasting spit;
A woman by the fount . . .
And in the twilight grey
Apollo's temple.

How was it when Paul came?
Corinth was blazing white,
Walled and rich and corrupt.
They "sat to eat and drink
And rose up but to play!"
The Purple Sellers knew . . .
But in the twilight gleamed
Apollo's temple!

The fountain's hung with moss
But the cypress-trees are tall,
And little wingèd shapes
Say "Níke" in the ground.
The Jews "requiring signs,"
And the Greeks "looking for wisdom,"
Still in the twilight, see
Apollo's temple!

AQUAMARINE

I THINK, when I grow tired of the world,
I shall go back to Greece (in spring, of course),
By forest trail, and oleander source,
Past snow-peaks on green mountain lawns
impearled.

To Trypi: where, from saddle I shall slide,
And hear my donkey's bell jerk as he feeds
On herbs and simples—growing to his needs—
By rosy roofs set in the green glenside.

Far down the valleys I shall hear the call
Of white-garbed peasants; throaty cattle-cry;
The little Trypi brook will rustle by
Among the poplars, silver-green and tall.

I shall watch Greek girls, toiling up the height,
Laden with brush and whorls of scented thyme,
And see their youthful climbing pantomime,
Ere I lie down to ponder with my might

On three sweet subjects, simple village themes,
And yet so strange, so subtle, I have met
No man, nor woman, who can tell me yet
The answers, nor have found them in my dreams.

First: The Greek plane-trees, cool ancestral
trees,
Biblical-strong, like mighty tents of Saul,
What earth power spreads their green ethereal
Canopied gloom, their soft immensities?

Next, the Greek fruits and flowers; what godlike
soil
Nourishes orange, fig, and olive stretch,
So that no child goes forth the goats to fetch
But fills his cap with colored orchard spoil?

Last, I shall ponder (never sure, quite,
Imaging richly, merged in miracle)
Wondering what source conceals the mystic shell
Staining with blue the Ægean's mica-light.

Lies in it some great Pool, that slow distils
Azure of flowers and skies to pigment bold?
Or do the encircling mountain-chains enfold
A vat of purple, whence wine-color spills?

Ægean Blue, that crimson-orchil tide
Bold, deep, intensest, incandescent flame,
Pure well of Azure, fitly has no name
But Greece in her inimitable pride

Of worship on strange occult secret planes
The hidden sponsors of her visual life
May, long ago, 'neath sacrificial knife
Have loosed the gods' blue blood from Dacian
veins.

One can see Spartan blood flow down Greek
shores,

In crimson poppy-tide, in scarlet waves;
But it is "wine-dark" energy, that laves .
Gold-bronzèd rocks and hidden sea-cave floors.

Ah! it is not enough for me to say
"Faery silver-azure! Clear, superb
Cobalt no chemistry of sun can curb,
Attar of purest lapis-lazuli."

'Tis not enough for me to invent a name
Like Nauplian Blue, Greek Blue, Blue of
Emprise,
As I re-vision golden argosies
Or red-sailed moth-boats sailing molten flame.

No—I must ponder (never sure quite),
Always a-dream in Trypi, where the trees
Whisper adventurous old names of seas,
Through silver valley-eve and mountain night.

THE SHEPHERDESS

Not only mulberry vendors travel Langada Pass,
Rough soldiers and black-fezzed peddlers take
that trail

And stop to drink at a khan 'neath the rocky
mass,

Where the pine-trees root in the drifts of sliding
shale,

And a half-crazed Greek sells resin-wine and
cheese

And "Thalassa" mutters, pointing to far-off seas.

For Langada Pass is miles of precipice rock

Where the rug-hung pack-mules scramble with
fumbling feet

Sliding unsteadily over the cobbles, that shock,
Stone upon stone, in monotonous noontide heat.

But a mountain girl, fleet-footed, with brown
knees bare,

Flutters along the crags, where the great pines
flare.

Now the mulberry vendors are fuddled with
Spartan rum,

They howl in the cañons and kick the sides of
their steeds.

The soldiers are merry, they sit on the rocks and
hum
And talk politics and twiddle their malachite
beads;
Hardly a shrine for a maid, or a convent roof,
Under the blue sky, classic and calm and aloof;
The goats stand cynical, cloven of horn and
hoof.

But she whistles and calls and scrambles up to
her flock,
High on the bronze-grey peaks of Langada Pass,
With warm eyes mote-flecked, bright as the
quartz gold rock
A deer-like, dryad-like fierce, shy, crag-born
lass,
Perching where orange anemones spangle the
banks
And white streams flash down thicketed moun-
tain flanks.

We told her the tale of the world and the dreams
of men,
We poured out wine-of-the-world in her shepherd
cup,
She took it calmly, thoughtfully, drinking up
All that we were, quaffing us, thirstily, then:
"Salute your cities," the wild little shepherdess
said,
And swift as an eagle, far up the precipice sped.

Washington, New York, and Boston have new
renown!

Their rivers of seething light, where the witch
wires hold

Clustering, bright-balled fruits, and the chim-
neys frown

Like satyrs drunk with smoke through the sunset
gold—

All these must bow, in turn, to a little lass

Who “salutes the cities” out of Langada Pass!

MAY-DAY IN KALAMATA

IN Kalamata, where the harvests are
Purple and crimson for the currant-bin,
When merchants close their shutters with a jar,
The young night-gallant twangs his brown guitar,
And first begins the merry May-day din.

All night they strum the mandolins and
lutes;
Glyco, the jolly merchant of the fruits,
Sings to accordion: "O nux kalé!"
In Kalamata on the first of May.

Morning comes. See the church across the
street
Its doorway wreathed! See Anastasia pass,
Twining her pretty shoulders with the sweet
Mountain-born orchids, brought on tireless feet
By lads from Sparta o'er Taÿgetos.

All night they strum the lute, and mandolin,
Georgio, the dark-eyed, plays the violin,
Sings under balconies: "O nux kalé!"
In Kalamata on the first of May.

The cottage-doors are hung with poppy-wreaths,
To keep away the evil spirits: hats
Are garlanded with oleander. Leaves
Fair, golden-braided Marianthé weaves
Into a veil for her long sunny plaits.

All night they sound the flutes and casta-
nets;
Mitchu, in pompommed shoes, fingers the
frets,
Quaffs resin-wine,—“Aha—! O nux kalé!”
In Kalamata on the first of May.

To the *Platea*, all the booths astir;
Mulberry vendors clad in goat-skins come;
Here are embroidered bags and fragrant myrrh,
And silver-handled knives; and the drum-whirr
Beats like a heart throb in the village hum.

All night they play the rough accordion;
The sailors from the “skala,” to a man,
March, drunk with mastika, along the
quay,
In Kalamata on the first of May.

Along the railroad all the stations fill
With children garlanded; the peasant throngs
Sing at car windows. From a laurel hill,
Rings “Zito” with the happy springtime thrill,
While rose-crowned maidens chant their merry
songs.

All night they play the violin and drum;
And to the windows tawdry women come
Bright-eyed and bold, to hear: "O nux
kalé!"

In Kalamata on the first of May.

May-day, down all the silver-olive plain,
Along the mountain trail, and torrent track,
May-day on ships on blue Messenian Main,
On locomotives, where the young Greek swain
Hangs lily wreaths upon his engine stack!

All night I hear the zither; the guitar
Maddens my northern pulses, and from far,
Far up the mountainside: "O nux kalé!"
Wakes Kalamata on the first of May.

FROM THE ARCADIAN GATE

FROM Arcadian Gate, with its tower-topped
bulk,
White on Ithóme's war-ridden hulk,
A road winds down past the artichokes,
And the almond-trees, and acacia-spokes.
And, silver-harnessed, the small brooks fly
Down to Messenian industry.
And, here one sees, under the trees,
Greek women making the cheese.

Black kettles hang from the giant plane,
Where children gather, and where you gain
A charming sight from your donkey-mount,
For the wash-trough's set by the village-fount,
And, hanging high on the olive-boughs,
Where, grey, light-fingered zephyrs drowse,
Swaying in bags, in the summer breeze,
Greek babies take their embroidered ease.

In old Dodona, so they say,
In a time when priest-craft had its sway,
"The Will of the Gods" came jostling,
Through the oak-leaves' gentle rustling,

And the Priest of the Oracle carefully hung
Brazen vessels, which, easily rung,
By moving branches, in many keys,
Instructed the Greeks how their gods to please.

'Tis an old Greek fashion this hanging of things;
Many the legends from which it springs.
Twists of scarlet, and bright-dyed flax,
Hang on the rough Arcadian shacks,
Where the railroad follows the mountain base.
They hang brown jugs by the watering-place.
Amulets hang on the goats and the swine;
Wreaths hang high on the house and the shrine.

And now the pots for the cheese
And the babies in black-eyed reveries
Sway, like the brasses long ago.
Hanging on high branch and on low!
Somehow the sight doth strangely please,
This new fruit on the old Greek trees!
One hears "Will of the Gods!" in speech
Babbling from olive and oak and beech.

THE ABBESS

PINK oleander lamps the brook-bed trails,
And orange-trees hang fruitage o'er the grain,
And there are hedges, green with fitful rain,
And cyclamen in white the hillside veils.

While through the villages, 'neath Mistra's
height,

The children run to give a rose and stare
At strangers riding where grey olives flare
Mistily in the long hills' summer light.

Rose-pinnacled, a Franco-Turkish wall
Trailing with ivy, rears its crumbling mass,
Pantassa Church's apse and mouldered hall
Look down upon the plain of Eurotas.

Byzantine tower's clear octagonal,
Jewel-like and fretted, circles on the sky;
A paved walk leads to the nunnery,
Past moss-grown arch and ruined capital.

And here, an Abbess, old, yet maiden-faced,
Sits in a frigid pomp, in solemn pride:
Stately, aloof, the church's pallid bride,
Greets us with countenance austere and chaste.

The Abbess leads the way, with rigid calm,
Detached, haughty, imperious; her eyes
Pompously ignorant, religious-wise,
Cool as the blank intoning of a psalm.

There are great piles of rose-leaves in the room,
Convent-brewed wines and bright bags, needle-
wrought;

There is an ancient fountain in the court,
And guttering candles in the Church's gloom.

"The times have changed," we said; "women
no more

Hide them from life. We mingle and we work.
Christ only asks that not a soul shall shirk
Or flinch from bearing burdens that He bore."

The Abbess smiled. "Silence," she said; "*we*
learn,

On this hilltop we women watch the East,
The morning sun o'er Sparta is our priest,
The mountain stars like midnight tapers burn."

We looked at her; her eyes were crystal clear,
Passionless, pure and cold as moonlit snow.
Something she felt that we could never know;
Our vision to her eyes could not appear.

We left her in the shadowed court to brood,
Where Frankish frescoes peer through shadows
dim,

And cloistered nuns in tuneless, wailing hymn,
Chant Faith untried in mountain solitude.

GREEK FARMERS

IN green Laconia, where the hedges are
Spring-starred with flowers, and the little brooks
Wake all the mountains from their solemn
dreams

Of the old days, when gods moved strong and
white

On hill and sea, or slept within the clouds;
There are great slopes, broken with tillage, rough
With clumsy ploughing, thick with olive-trees.
And here they stand, the tall, black-bearded
men,

Whose eyes, unblinking, look into the sun.
Men, plainly bred from tribal wanderings,
Whose blood is fevered fire, men whose lands
Are bare with waste and bloodshed; men who
stand

Gazing at strangers with shy interest;
Who, when you question their fresh peasant-eyes
Straighten up from their field-tasks and reply:
"These are our flocks and pastures—we are
Greeks!"

Black-bearded men who sow, What is the Seed?
For Greece has lain beneath the Turkish plough,

And all her hills and mountains smoke again
With treachery, rape, and murder. On the
seas

The nations wait to grasp; the kings and crews
Who play the Blood-game snap at little lands
Like dogs at flies. Yea, that fair seed ye sow,
Is it Greek seed? though sown by mongrel hands?
Seed of a greatness far exceeding theirs,
The lands that would despoil Greece? Will it
grow

That seed, Deucalion's hope, Athena's pride,
Is it once more the sacred seed that fell
Out of Demeter's hand on holy ground?
Or, is it Cadmus-sown, for crops of Hell?
Truthfully, farmers, can ye stand and say:
"These are our fields and pastures, we are
Greeks"?

They make no answer—strong, black-bearded
men,

Grimly at work on the Phigalian Hill
Where the grey Bassæ Temple guards the corn.
They make no answer in the mountain towns
Arcadian, where pink-roofed houses splotch
The hillsides and where hidden teamsters climb
Thicketed bridle-paths beside the streams.
They cannot tell us, if they know, what seed
The sculptors, patriots, and statesmen sowed;
Nor even if these furrows that they plow
Will bring a season's harvest to their doors.

But, as we pass them, under upland oaks,
Under the fig-trees in the rocky gorge,
They walk with strange, fleet steps, so tireless,
So strong, with eyes set on some distant goal,
Till we, too, puzzled, murmur: "*They are Greeks.*"

Oh, fateful World! insatiate modern life—
Driven by urgencies too great to tell,
Destroying, recreating, balancing—
What of this Old World, dreaming modern
dreams,
Yet with the old dream dwelling in the land
To teach it Pride? Shall we dare face a Greek—
With all his shining temples at his back,
With the eternal Thought behind his name,—
As he were German, Russian, Turk, Chinese?
If these black-bearded mongrels share the pride
Of Argonauts and claim a classic birth
And till the wild land, dropping in the seed,
Forever saying softly, "We are Greeks,"
Why should they garner any other crop,
Why should they bend and toil for better gain
Than seeing New Greece realize her dream?

SONG

TOIL on, fishermen!
Pan sits on the cliff,
Smiles and watches the fare,
Wreaths him with flowers there,
Bites at a lettuce leaf,
Binds him a poppy sheaf,
Drinks from a painted jug,
Watching the full nets tug;
Toil on, fishermen!

Work on, harvesters!
Demeter rests on the hill,
Near to the threshing-floor;
Near to the cottage door,
Girds her with fruited vines,
Blows foam from the wines,
Drinks from a golden bowl,
While corn-filled wagons roll;
Work on, harvesters!

Rest well, goat-herds!
Hermes cares for the sheep,
Flashes across the sun,

Burnishes helmet wings,
The wreathed caduceus brings,
To swift talaria-flight,
Through the sheep-scattered night;
Rest well, goat-herds!

TO THE OLYMPIAN HERMES

Now let the formal, folded curtain fall
Over this majesty of mellowed stone.
Let me go forth with eyes alight with joy
From this god-gazing. Let me not pause nor
stay

Till by some clear word I have given faith
To doubting minds, how Greeks ennobled form
And carved high meaning in a body's truth.
Yet, Hermes, fair god, consciously the flower
Of the Greek dream, sculptured so lofty-kind,
Stainlessly physical, superbly true;—
Who is to tell thee that thou hast one fleck
On that pure manliness, and dare to speak
Something against thy calm that seems to say,
"Earth has no greater gift than perfect limbs,
And god-like manhood's straight significance"?
Forgive me, Hermes, I had thought to take
Thy princely healthiness to ailing worlds;
To meanness and to littleness and lust,
Bidding them gaze upon thee in thy calm,
Telling them: "This is all. This Hermes stands
For Greek expression of a definite truth
Speaking its message to the world of men
And placing beauty as a final goal."

But then I pondered: What will be the gain
 If men say: "Hermes is very kind and fair,
 Wholesome and generous and unafraid
 And—soulless! Let be! we'll no longer hope
 For strength more than the body—loftier calm
 Than this superb control of manly limbs,
 Friendly with sun and rock, and sea, and life.
 Now yield we up that old, defeated claim
 Of soul, the ugly, hunted, harried thing,
 And trust us to a pagan manliness,
 Stand Hermes-like, unpuzzled, unamazed!"
 I knew, oh Hermes! Greek perfection, lit
 Like stately lamp with one clear, shining joy,
 That of well-being, I knew life ended not
 With just the beauty of a human form;
 Marble, translated into mystery
 Must needs have line to make it fair and
 right;
 And that is all . . . Thy unknown sculptor
 knew
 The pagan mind and set thy godhood high,
 In an unsullied semblance of a man
 Untouched by sorrow, poverty, and shame.
 Immortal *semblance*—then the cleavage comes!
 Real men must live (we mortals know the fight),
 Hot-blooded, passionate, forlorn, astray;
 We know how men determine to be true
 To some one Greatness,—struggle to the test
 Baffled and crucified;—in bitter shame
 Leaving the unsolved meaning of their lives.

And now we know, by those French faces torn
To rags, around the dumbly loyal eyes;
By English soldiers, done to crippled wrecks
And hideous mangling, how men dare to die,
Or live their silent, agonizing days.
And then we know there is a human thing
Transcending any body—called a Soul!
Yea, let the formal, folded curtain fall
O'er all that graciousness of mellowed stone.
The Pagan knew the beauty of the flesh.
We, Modern, view that beauty with resolve
Firm and unswerving that it be outdone,
Firm that all ugly, bruised, and broken things
Shall stand invested with a deathless pride
Before our eyes—that see them beautiful;
Determined that the perfect ones approach
Humbly with sense of some imperfectness,
And kneel in homage to the shattered brave.

GREECE, 1915-16

YEA, taunt me, World Voice—I am dumb and
blind,
My body broken, and my heart unclad.
Yet am I silent, while strange forces wind
The chains about me. Helpless, scorned,
maligned,
I answer not. The Greece of long ago
Speaks for me in this newest time of woe.

Europe reviles me. Yea, I stand alone
Like woman left before the ruined door,
Like woman who, beneath her outraged moan,
Remembers sacred hours. Like a stone
I am cold, passionless, mid the wild uproar,
Murmuring "Peace" and "Hellas" o'er and
o'er.

Apollo's beauty sprang from out my womb;
Socrates called me, mother. Every hill
And templed glade, and solemn-urnèd tomb,
Bids me refrain; no longer to resume
War and rapine, no longer blood to spill,
Nor hate engender, nor intent to kill.

Europe! Greece speaks, Greece, who so deeply
drank

The bitter cup of ravage; who has laid
A new foundation: near her altars, blank
Of by-gone fires, she phalanxes the rank
Of golden grain. And bids the new-born Greek
Old classic words with modern tongue to speak.

Homer withholds me, Æschylus restrains,
"Human Euripides" exhorts me—"Stay!"
I was despoiled once; strike off my chains,
Unsay the insult! Greece nor plots nor feigns,
Only withholds her, agonized, at bay,
But loyal to her hallowed cliffs and plains!

THE SINGING STONES

"Remember me, the Singing Stone . . . for . . .
Phœbus . . . laid on me his Delphic harp—thenceforth
I am lyre-voiced; strike me lightly with a little pebble;
and carry away witness of my boast."—*Greek Anthology*.

BEYOND brute Titan dissonance, black, bitter
 strains
Of Warfare; through the smitten fields of wheat;
Upon the bloody bridges, where the wains
Roll drone chords between marching soldier-feet;
Through mob-voice, robbed of cadence and of
 beat,
I hear the Stones of Sunion
Singing by the sea:

"Lift we on high our time-defying shafts!
Our white-wing on the promontory stays,
Our age-old glory from the Ancient wafts
Godward out of an old, blind, Pagan mood,
While in the surging blue the Islands brood
In dim, time-purpled haze."

Out of the din of sociologic strife,
Of hoarse-voiced men, embruted by their work,
Of women, low-intoning lesser life,
From the rich Theme, which modern voices shirk,

Where all the forced, half-harmonizings lurk,—
I hear the stones of Delphi
Singing in the rain:

“Black swell the mountains, guarding well the
Cleft,
Clear spills the water, o’er the fountain rim,
The worshipers are gone, the priests bereft.
Men keep no light upon the altar dim;
No Council meets, but ah, the hope is left,
The dream goes on, new voices chant the Hymn.”

To the soft twilight of Æsthetic ease,
Where a smile is no smile, a tear no tear;
Where the fruit has no seed, the wine no lees,
No strong song comes. Yet, faintly year by year,
’Mid those who listen, wistful, and in fear,
I hear the stones of Bassæ
Singing on the heights:

“Grey comes the dawn upon the mountain crest,
Warm lie the vines on the Phigalian Hill;
The deities are gone, their secrets rest
Hidden by time. But still the Sun-God smites
Altar and soil, and richly thus requites
The farmers’ faith, and all the fields fulfill.”

And everywhere my wistful head is bowed,
Pensive, absorbed, to find significance,
I hear stone chorus; the immortal crowd
Of pillars round some vocal radiance—

Chant Spirit-Song of new inheritance—
I hear all Pagan Temples
Singing in the dawn:

“Lift we on high our columns shining white!
Our broad wings on the promontories stay;
For us forever was the world's first light,—
Ignorant God-seeking. Ye, that follow, may
Soar to a higher vision! 'mid the Pagan night.
We were the singers of a brighter Day.”

THE OLD QUEST

"Feed in joy thine own flock and look on thine own land."—*Greek Anthology*.

"FRIEND! hast thou seen the rosy mass
Of cyclamen along the pass

To Arcady?

Doth the green country sweep enlarge
Beneath the white cloud's floating barge?
Does the sun lift a gleaming targe

On Arcady?

"Hold. . . . Do the trees keep happy nests
Between the young leaves' trembling breasts

In Arcady?

Does running water laugh and sing,
Do butterflies waft wing-and-wing?
Spins the white moon her mystic ring

O'er Arcady?

"Speak!—Are there greenwoods cool and dense,
Do flower-grails gleam out from thence

In Arcady?

Do pines the aisles and arches blur,
With frankincense and breaths of myrrh,
Veiling the happy forms that stir

Through Arcady?

"Thou seest that I am blind,"—said he,
"But hast thou been where I would be
In Arcady?

Oh! didst thou see within the gate
The one who promised me to wait?
Stays she for me, though I come late
To Arcady?

"I wonder that she doth not send
A clue to show the roads that trend
To Arcady—
But thou canst tell me. Does it rise
Empinnacled to azure skies? . . .
Thou sayst? . . . *None knoweth where it lies,
Fair Arcady!*"

*'Tis sunset and the end of day,
The roads are closed—so all men say—
To Arcady.
The birds and butterflies are fled;
The honey quaffed; the perfume shed;
The feet that used to dance are sped
From Arcady.*

"The roads are closed? . . . Oh, not to me!
Thou seest that I am blind," said he.
"And Arcady? . . .
Full well I know thou liest now,
Hast thou the world-mark on thy brow?
Hast thou no one to 'wait thee—thou?
In Arcady?"

He wanders down the darkling way
The mute horizons watch him stray
 Toward Arcady.

His feet are bleeding, he is blind,
He dreams of that he will not find,
But in his wide unconquered mind
 Lives Arcady!

THE GODS ARE NOT GONE, BUT MAN IS BLIND

OVER the hills the gods come walking,
Where the black pines draw their swords,
And the spell-bound leaves cease talking,
For the High-Priest sun comes stalking
And 'tis no time for words.

And oh! the gifts the gods are bringing—
Stretches of happy heath,
Jewels with souls, and flowers singing;
Smiling stars, and new hope springing
With the wingèd hope called Death!

Over the hills the pipes are playing,
And the gods come strong and fair.
Alas! they know not of the straying,
The faithlessness and bitter saying:
“ We know no gods, nor care. . . . ”

Over the hills—the day-sky kindles
On a blackened world of clods;
Dead and dry are the flaxless spindles,
The cruse is drained,—the fire dwindles . . .
No worshipers for the gods!

THE SEA OF TIME

(Sappho sings to Alcæus)

ONLY our few short hours,
For you and me;
Temples and groves and bowers,
And then—the Sea!

Only our finite word
For you and me,
Who knows what gods have heard
Under the Sea?

Love, though the gold moons wane
For you and me,
We shall not meet again
Down by the Sea.

Ours shall be hidden ways;
For you and me
Stretch the long separate days—
Mist on the Sea!

Artemis—will she say
For you and me
What Law we must obey
Moves in the Sea?

Moves, till the faces worn
By you and me,
Luminous, dream-forsworn
Change in the Sea?

Change, for unending tides
Bear you and me
And the Self in us glides
From Sea to Sea.

Love, shall the sailing souls
Of you and me
Float where new shore unrolls
Rimmed by the Sea?

Comes then the meeting place
For you and me?
Silence . . . white bubbles trace
Foam on the Sea!

ON THE THOROUGHFARE

TO-DAY I go to buy some dates
From Glyco's cart.
"Ten cents," my smiling fruitman states,
And then we part—
I to the mart,
He for the next fig-buyer waits!

Back to my world I go, its keen
Quick energy
And competitions sharp and mean,
Its flippancy,
And sophistry,
And tampering with things unclean;

But Glyco waits; he has ten cents;
And he has hope,
And back of him, antecedents
Give him such scope!
With his traditions' affluence
I cannot cope!

AT PÆSTUM

THE low, flat marshland, myrtle overrun,
A palm, a Roman wall that skirts the way,
The far blue reaches of Salerno's bay,
Then . . . the three temples standing in the sun.

These are the caskets of the sun-sealed years;
'Mid tides that ebb and flow, 'neath stars that set,
Deathless their grave and tranquil beauty . . .
yet
Buried in silence, in eternal tears.

Beneath these tympana the Dorians trod;
Here, Doric priests upon an alien shore
Made sacrifice, perhaps these myrtles wore,
And garlanded the offering to their god.

Demeter saw the bright libations spilled;
To Hermes leapt the scarlet through the fleece.
Amid these columns moved the gods of Greece;
These lofty spaces with the pæan thrilled.

This, centuries ago. Demeter now
Is known no more. Poseidon, too, hath fled.
'T would seem that Pan and Hermes both are
dead;
No Nike springs upon a Grecian prow.

Yet is this sacred pause, this pillared calm
Still stirred by whispers from Tyrrhenian waves
While near the shadows of these architraves
Lie smiling shores of terraced fruit and palm.

And springing from Demeter's altar site,
Where the old dream of gods hath died away,
And the Greek torch burned down to ashen grey,
There blooms a star shape, mystical and white.

One mystical white star! Oh! Pagan fire
Whose temples stand, whose gods have been
forgot,

One goddess holds in memory this spot,
Else why should Nature thus in bloom aspire?

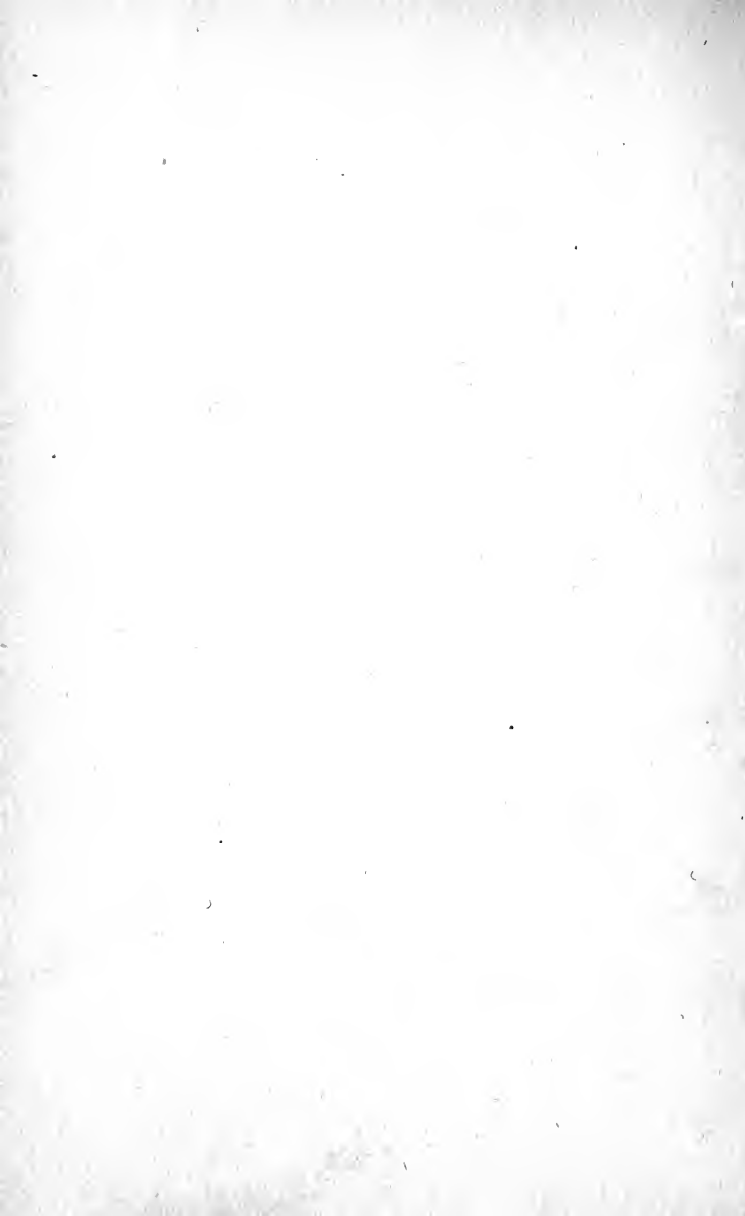
Why else in this dim fane the sea intone,
And sun send fire to the altars bare,
And moss and lichen trace strange scripture,
where

The lizards flash like symbols o'er the stone?

The low, flat marshland, myrtle overrun,
A palm, a Roman wall that skirts the way,
The far blue reaches of Salerno's bay,
Then . . . the three temples standing in the sun.

PHIDIAS

A DRAMATIC EPISODE



PHIDIAS

A DRAMATIC EPISODE

Dungeon in an Athenian prison; a small grated window near the ceiling shows a patch of blue sky. The scene discloses Phidias, prostrate and manacled. In the dusk of the cell lingers the JAILER.

JAILER (*curiously*). What sayst thou, Phidias,
who art accused?

The old plaint, snarling that thou art abused?

PHIDIAS (*lifting his head wearily*). What do I
answer? Yea! what thing thou wilt!

What care I for this legendary guilt?

Who makes or unmakes Unity? Accused?

Why, any fool accuses. It amused

The enemies of Pericles to stab

At him through me. Let gossips spread their
blab,

The sea is just as broad, the sky as clear

And I as blameless.

JAILER (*persisting*). But that brought thee here,
Took thee from royal favor, once the dear

Adviser, friend of Pericles. It seems
Here is the end of all thy mighty dreams;
'Twas Pericles who made thee, and there lurks
His royal patronage about thy works.

PHIDIAS (*sullenly*). So reason vulgar minds; as
well to say
Hephæstus made me, manacled this way,
Hammered to fever, bent to twisted woe.
No, clown! no tyrant brought this overthrow,
Nor my once vivid glory, but the fate
That overtakes the artist; whether late,
Slow, poisoning, by deadly world-born things,
Or early blight of strong imaginings
Too fervent for his frame. Athens is free
From every blame. Not Pericles made me!

JAILER (*wagging his head obstinately*). 'Twas
love of Pericles that cast thee here,
Un geniused thee, put thee to rot in drear
Murk of this den; and if not he who made
Thee what thou wast—aloof and haughty blade
Fellow I watched in Agora, as one
Treading on air, thy white himation
Streaming like wings back of thy eager form,
As thy swift sandal moved among the swarm
Of merchants, gamesters, thieves; while deep
gaze drank
Of something that was neither wealth nor
rank—

Why then,—who made thee? for that thou
hast fame

'Tis granted, when the rabble speak thy name.

PHIDIAS (*moving restlessly, clenches his hands,
answering impatiently*). I made me, fool,
made this unfinished self,

Nourished me as a child, in happy health,
Fostered the thirst my mother gave to me
With her electric milk. Ecstatic tree
Charmides planted, I did grow and thrive,
Adding to that, what Greece alone could give!
Studied cult-statues, studied Xoana, saw
Paralysis in Polygnotus' law,
Wondered that Hegias and Hageladas wrought
Hardly beyond the cold Egyptian thought.
Out of their almond-eyed archaic things,
New butterfly, my free Athena springs!
My Zeus Olympian came to my prayer
To see a god. I saw, then made him there!
(*To jailer.*) Poor ragged dolt, clanking thy
silly keys,
Did Pericles make me as I made these?
Did Athens tell me what a man must do
Who sees instinctive *life*, and sees it true?

JAILER (*impudently*). How now! What saw'st
thou that *I* might not see?

A rosy nymph at bath! Aphrodite
Caught in a net of foam? Hermes' dis-
guise?

Come now, what is this power within thine eyes?

PHIDIAS (*speaking dreamily as if to himself*).

What is the power? Life! The heroic thing
Streaming magnetic from a sea-gull's wing,
That light in stars, in waves, in children's
eyes,

In green plane-tree, or in deep, sphinx-like
skies

Of unknown countries, where the grasses blow
Unseen of man; where flower-laced streamlets
flow

Past mystic herbs, Demeter loves to keep
Secretly growing on the mountain steep.

I saw the curves of fruits, saw Grecian sails
Take fire-blue seas; saw the soft, misty veils
Of maidens wrap their limbs, saw horses,
shields,

Victories, warriors, priests, and battlefields;
Each man a poem; women each a jar
Filled with soft, psychic flame, an avatar
Shaped to a noble outline, lofty truth
From some great vital Source—

(*The Sculptor breaks off suddenly, scrutinizing
the jailer and continuing.*)

Rascal, uncouth
As are thy words and gestures, I can see
Some trace of life-light.—Gods! were I but
free—

JAILER (*interrupting with smug complacency*).

Which, proper thanks to Theseus, thou art
not,

Thou light-fingered; thou dingy-robed sot!
Carving thy way to treason, selling State
For greasy coin, with Hermes as thy mate
Slanting his profile on it. Dreamer,—thou!
“Bronze-worker.” Yea! By Dionysus!

How

Thou workedst guilty things for Athens’
shame,

Thinking to hide behind thy Patron’s name!
Athens, the famous city; thou, a worm,
Coiling in earth, no four-eyed marble herm
Will mark. Our furry worms that make the
silk

Munch the mulberry; but thy crafty ilk
Munch the fine gold, for sickly marble shapes
Of statues stoned by every Jack-a-napes;
’Twas thou, worm, coiled ’round thy princely
friend,

And gained War-Treasure for thy braggart’s
end.

PHIDIAS (*sadly musing*). The fool is glib. His
lesson he has got

From Agora and Propylæa, not

The polished utterance of Bema’s Hill.

But that crowd’s word, that bodes or good or
ill

From a fierce thirst; sneering pitiless breath,
Freezing a man, or scorching him to death.

JAILER (*scratching his head, expectorates knowingly and argues*). Why are thy statues costly? with the urns

Of Dipylon Gate, the passer-by discerns
Good lusty statues, made by Such-an-one,
Quite comely, they, and all of porous stone;
Why use Pentelic marble? so much gold?
Thou dreamer-schemer, sculptor overbold?

PHIDIAS (*with a moan turns from his tormentor to face the stone wall, muttering*). "Dreamer,"
he called me. Is it by that name

My curse comes? Verily; I dreamed my
shame,

My rich accusings. Dreamed brook-flowing
folds

Of draperies, dreamed my young hero-moulds,
Dreamed men who sat their horses, as they
rode

Clouds over seas, dreamed Panathenaic ode
In singing-rhythm round the Parthenon;
The frieze and metopes of Theseion;

Dreamed the sweet-bodied girls, whose maiden
strength

Poise vase and basket all the Temple length.

Dreamed the slow, garlanded, portentous
beasts,

Led by the veiled and sacrificial priests;
Dreamed the young, leaping horseman's
 haughty ease
Pediment grouped, or filleted in frieze.
Was it a dream only to-day shall know?
Lives it no longer than this artist's throe?
If that must be, then butterfly most drear
I sink back to the worm-thing crawling here.

JAILER (*having curiously listened, now struts
forward and faces the Sculptor. He eyes him
stupidly and shakes his finger at him*). Why,
were it not for Pericles who gave

Thee marble, color, gold for statues brave,—
Poured out his coffers,—we should amply be
Equipped for Persia. Bronze and ivory
Changed back to drachmæ, all the sacred
 rock

Would stand as staunch, to the barbaric shock,
As when Pisistratus, with hardy race,
Made the Acropolis his fortress place.
And look ye, with that gold Athena wears
(Filched from State monies, for thy stone
 affairs),

We could plant ships in Piræus, array
Our strength to Corinth, where the Persians
 may

Once more with envy strike.—But, thou
 wouldest bring
To a State's need thy stone imagining!

Fie! but for gold, thy dreams would be as
vague

As fat my wife scrapes from altar-dreg,
And boils to stuff to make my chiton white;
Ethereal substance, wind-shaken, alight
With lambent iridescence, very fine,
From the amphora gushing forth like wine.
But look you, in a moment, just a trace
Of foam is all that froths from out the vase,
And nothing's left but the damp greasy lees;
So knave, with thee, without thy Pericles!

THE SCULPTOR (*with scornful amusement to himself*).

He mouths that name as if it were a mask,
Through which a stupid actor says his task,
Forgets, mistakes, yet struts around the place
Thinking the mask gives him a certain grace.
(*Phidias wearily rises and stretches himself, the
jailer meanwhile curiously observing him.*)

PHIDIAS (*abruptly*). Slave, thou art childish,
many a name like this

Links close to art, for its own ego-bliss,
To have possession, be the master, who
Owns, keeps, controls, the work we artists do.
Pericles views the height of Athens' power,
Pomp of Acropolis, where every hour
In golden, crimson, blue, and creamy dye
Ecstatic marble forms sing to the sky,

And hears them sing! (This for his kingly wage:)

“*Nikomen*, Athens, Pericles, Golden Age!”

JAILER (*looking at the prisoner with heavy curiosity*). And what, by Hades, is the thing they sing?

PHIDIAS (*turns impulsively to answer; then a fierce reticence makes him draw himself up and turn away*). Torture me not with thy coarse questioning;

My sorrowing answers, for the ribaldries
Of bath or games: “Thus spluttered Phidias,
Maddened at being walled up.” So the crass
Idling crowd, jostling in brainless mass,
Gapes, sneers, and marvels, at my grim defeat;
Mud covers stately names where rascals meet.

JAILER (*with offended dignity*). Well, then,
good-night. I leave thee to thy prayers.
No friends, no patron, for thy artist-wares,
Unless, indeed (*grinning back of his hand*)
Zeus showers thee with gold
Like Danaë.

PHIDIAS (*steadily and reverently*). Yea, most
mighty Zeus can hold
Me to my service, to that Ageless Thing
Higher than he, called Beauty.

(*He breaks off suddenly, goes eagerly to the now departing jailer, saying authoritatively*).

Fellow, bring
Here to my cell, some wax, a tool or two,
Some clay, a lump, stuck in thy cap will do—
A hand's length of the white, Pentelic stone,
From where it sleeps within the mountain,
grown
Pregnant by streams and flowers, for some
birth
Of wingéd dream, out of hypnotic earth.

JAILER (*backing mockingly away, mimics coarsely*).

A jewel, a star, a little bit of wax!
Some tiny thing this mighty genius lacks!
That pearl, perchance, Aspasia's bosom decks,
Or blood-red stones hung round Hetairæ-necks!

PHIDIAS (*beseechingly*). Only some clay, man,
in the dark my touch

Will fashion thee a goddess-image, such
As still they place in niches, who obey
"Sea-wards, oh! Mystæ," on Eleusis-Way.
I'll mould thee woman's hand, or horse's head,
A dreaming faun, Marsyas as he bled;
A babe's round, dimpled, saucy little back;
A vine-wreathed satyr, with his grape-filled
sack.

JAILER (*pompously drawing aloof*). By Dionysus!
that were illy done.

Artist is one thing. State another. Shun
Thee and punish thee, doth Will of State,
Who art no artist more, but he who late
Sculptor to Pericles, now is a knave,
Who sits and twists his thumbs in prison-
cave!

*(The JAILER finishes by an insulting gesture and
departs. PHIDIAS going to the heavy door
listens to his retreating footsteps. He draws
a long sigh and, standing with his back to the
door, looks up at the patch of blue sky, in
silence. At last he speaks.)*

Thus they leave Phidias, worker in the bronze,
Breather of life! breaker of chisel-bonds!

He is, they think, a man, a common thing—
All yellow, freckled, thin-blooded; they wring
His soul, because of policies.

Make him a sacrifice to fallacies;

“Drop him,” they say, in any dungeon now;

“Gods, grant in time his traitor’s neck shall
bow

To death, for that he trifled with the State!

Strike his face from the shield where he dared
mate

That face with Pericles,”—Oh! lofty Hill

High Sacred Rock, where sun-bathed columns
thrill;

Proud statue-gleaming, gold Acropolis;

Dreamed I so high, to fall as low as—this?

Athens, I made thee out of my heart’s blood;

Rising by ages, from Time's 'whelming flood.
Deucalion-fashion, soar my stones that sing
The beauty of this age's visioning.
Out of Iktinos' soul the Parthenon grew—
Those glorious Doric shafts, that taper through
The blaze of morn or eve. Athena's shrine,
Lodging her ivory maidenhood, is mine!
'Twas I who gave the Lemnian her life,
Knew god-like action whether peace or strife.
Knew how a god would stand, breathe, smile, or
frown,
And by that knowledge, deities' renown,
I was a god-creator. Yet I lie
Here in befoulèd darkness, with the sky
Still burning blue upon the mountain tops
Surrounding Athens; where the Sun-God stops
Of evening, all his golden fingers laid
On marble chords of rhythmic colonnade,
And plays so strange, so Delphic-high a
strain,
That hopes ethereal fill men's hearts again.
Oh! Athens, marble glory, is it naught
Phidias lived, and dreamed, and planned, and
taught?

(In his agony the Sculptor buries his head in his hands. There is a long silence, suddenly broken by the alighting of a CRICKET upon the small grated window; the CRICKET keeps up a steady trilling and is not at first noticed by the Sculptor.)

THE CRICKET

Greet, greet, greet,
Pan with hymning sweet.
Wine and corn are here,
Grapes and honey clear;
Olives, purple-black,
Burst from tawny sack.
Through Olympian night
Temples glimmer white
Stars their tangled vines
Wreathe around the shrines.
Shepherds all alone
Under mountain tree,
By the midnight sea,
Shall pipe songs of thee
Singer in the stone!

(PHIDIAS *listening intently, passes his hand over his eyes, creeps nearer under the grating, straining his gaze upward.*)

Prometheus! but I think this minstrel wrings
Wise melody from gauzy zither-wings,
A healing balm, like to the lustral wave
At Delphi, comes my broken soul to lave.
For, as he perches with his roundelay,
Methinks he counsels me; not for to-day
Only is artist-pride and feverish bliss—
Perchance my spirit still may suffer this
Infamy, yet go singing down the years!

(The Sculptor pauses doubtfully. Still looking upward, he presses closer beneath the little window.)

Answer me, Cricket, are my stricken tears,
My empty hands, proof of a thing to be,
That I dreamed true? If Beauty nourished
me,
Mothered and saved; shall I in ages more
Stand firm and proud, telling what guise she
wore
These days? For with young Myron I would
hold
There is a law of Beauty, which, controlled
By men's stern truth, becomes a sacred thing,
Expanded from our holy cherishing.
It is not static, cold, but lives and grows
Out of the All of Life, the artist knows.

(The CRICKET after another silence, again chirps. This time the rythm is feebler and grows fainter and fainter, as the Sculptor, face upwards, eagerly listens.)

THE CRICKET

Sweet, sweet, sweet,
Praise is full and meet;
O'er the architrave,
Beautiful and brave,
Strong and good and fair,
Poise in hallowed air.

In the violet clime,
In the winter rime,
On the poppied steep,
In the passes deep,
All the temples know
Paths that Greece shall go
Toward posterities
Far beyond the seas!
Far as man is known,
Thou shalt speak to men
Far beyond thy ken,
Beyond tongue or pen,
Singer in the stone!

(PHIDIAS *at the close of the lilt lifts both arms appealingly. The CRICKET is silent a moment.*)

PHIDIAS. Hist!—the green minstrel, god-of-little-things,
Thinketh perchance he strums his lyric wings
On dark Hymettus, where bees sip so long,
They lose their way in all the flower throng,
And many a little waxy dot of fuzz
Is caught in honey-prison. (*Whimsically.*)
Thou dost buzz
Cricket, as loud as I, encased
In this hard prison, bitter to my taste.

(*The CRICKET after a long pause trills for the last time.*)

Fleet, fleet, fleet,
The ways of fame are sweet.
A marble head of dreams
Conquers the world, meseems.
Beautiful vases tell
How happy peoples dwell.
Beautiful bodies speak
New message to the weak.
Greece adown the years
Is the song of Seers.
Kora still intones
Nike still responds:
"Wielder of the wands."
"Worker in the Bronze."
"Singer in the Stones."

SCULPTOR (*suddenly and rapturously*). Xaire!
thou little herald, Xaire! thou
Hast cheered me, saved me! See my courage
now!
What foul, damp cell can ever hold me here?
What slander stain my work of yester-year?
Upon the Hill my glowing children call
To the unborn of Artists; to the All,
Great Fusion of the races, who
Shall yet unite, some holy thing to do,
Before this strange world on its journey far
In trackless space shall move an empty star.
For portico and frieze and vase and fane.
Fountain and stele, that our utmost main

Our utterest patience brought to perfect whole
Will cast strange, spellful seed, and where the
soul

Of art is known, its free, broad, ardent wing,
"Greece," will be whispered like a sacred
thing!

(*To the CRICKET.*) Yea, Yea! thou little
herald, "wingèd pipe,"

So I'll indite thee in thy wisdom ripe—
Now will I write my comrade young and lithe
Pæonius, how I imprisoned writhe.

Yet for his comfort will I softly tell
The cricket message to my dreary cell.
Luck! that I hid the chalk lump in my sleeve!
Joy that I have the parchment! Who'll
believe

That this is *all* he hath, who was the friend
Of Pericles brought to this bitter end!
(*The Sculptor with the parchment on his knee,
bustles himself in writing. Occasionally he
pauses and reads aloud what he has written.*)

Pæonius, good comrade, merry Greek,
Walking Olympian groves, watching the freak
Of scarlet-flowered pomegranate vine
Tasting the cool jugs filled with pine-tree
wine,

Fruits like warm bowls of amber nectar hung
And figs from branches o'er the streamlets
flung—

Read and reflect, and if thou com'st to see

Some supple scheme to set thy brother free,
Act on it swiftly; only be advised
Pericles' day is over. What he prized
Was proud display, but what the people want
Is arms and ships that they may proudly vaunt.
(Since Marathon no Greek knows how to
smile

Passing the Soros' valiant hero-pile,
And still they say in Sparta, athletes wait
To teach barbarians how Greece is great.)
I, the poor Sculptor, lived too near the throne,
Therefore, I lie now on the dungeon stone!
(PHIDIAS'S gaze wanders, he becomes absorbed,
*intense, then once more he applies himself
to the letter.*)

Last summer, passing Sunion, my sail
Red-burning down the stormy silver trail
O'er clouded blue, I humbly turned my sight
Up to that white fane, on the bronzed height,
All its upspringing columns touched with sun
As the slow golden clouds walked high upon
Wave buttressed paths, to purple Cyclades
Those mystic islands of Saronic seas.
And as the molten sapphire round me sprayed
O'er the eye-painted prow, I humbly prayed
Poseidon, that Piræus I might gain;
Offered no cock, no vase, oil to contain,
But vowed a frieze from my young pupil's
skill,
New, daring sculpture for the Sea-God's Hill

In Parian marble, calm and haughty white,
To gleam for sailors passing in the night.
How I was timid then! who after dared
Dispute with Pericles, and proudly shared
His vast ambitions for that golden realm—
That Athens, which the vulgar overwhelm.
That I did promise, wilt thou execute?
So will these singing stones, out of the mute
Parian marble, form immortal choir
Chanting "Poseidon" to the ocean's lyre.

(PHIDIAS *pauses once more. He draws a long
sigh, then continues writing.*)

Well, brother-artist, here I agonized,
Until a cricket, by great Zeus apprised,
Perched on the window-bar and chirped a
thing

Wise as Athena, took away the sting
Of the world's serpent-sayings. Friend, I
give

Faith to the cricket message while I live.
(*The Sculptor, head in hands ponders deeply
then again resumes writing.*)

He trilled, Pæonius, a theme like this:
What we *do* lives, though after all the bliss
Of our own living, must our bodies pass!
Hast ever caught the perfume of sweet
grass

Dying beneath the sickle? Our breath goes
Thus to the gods indifferent, 'mid the snows
High on Parnassos' or Kiona's crest,

Where mountain after mountain heaves a
breast,

Black, billow-deep, sky-ranging, in a chain
Tumultuously, serene around the plain.

But what we make of beauty keeps its power
Down the long years, from the conception's
hour.

For mark ye, lad, I never sensed my work,
But did it all unconscious; now in murk,
In prison black, I see it flying forth,
The strong wings of my friezes! All the worth
Of Laurion silver in Colossi paid
And proud Athena, ivory o'er laid.

Gold-sandalled, springing, mellow-marble feet,
Olive-crowned heads in pensive bending, sweet
Backs, limbs, and bosoms! Noble eye and
tress,

Caught in the dream of their own loveliness—
I see it all, so calm! "Nothing too much,"
Tunics in solemn folds, majesty such
As comes with purity; things strong and free;
White to the sky and naked to the sea.

Women and men that move adown the days
Out of the forest deep, through shimmering
maize,

In fructifying suns, in cooling dews,—
All tranquil, noble, filled with God, or Muse
Of deathless Greece.—Yea, all my strife,
My will, my soul, was this portrayal—Life!
(*Moved by what he has written, the Sculptor gets*

to his feet and paces feverishly his narrow cell. He goes on writing as he walks and reading aloud.)

I now see by prophetic cricket-voice
That Life is deathless, that my works rejoice
For all rejoicing. Brother mine
We carve for worlds to come. Beyond the
line
Of horizons, untravelled, rise the lands
Hungry of spirit, waiting at our hands
Bread of True Vision. Yea, where rusty wars,
Hot blood of nation-struggle, stain these
shores,
Women and men shall bleed with sacrifice
To a dead god, called Progress, and the Vice
Of chance-worship, on sickly, pampered knees
And counting gold in languors of disease.
Can'st picture these, coming to look upon
My glorious horsemen of the Parthenon?
Seeing your Nikes tread triumphant air?
Our marble dreams forever beauty-clean
And dark heroic bronzes stained with green,
By fire and sword and water all unspoiled,
Their perfect limbs' clear candor unassoiled?
Mark ye, those stranger eyes shall take and
take,
Still the thirst grow and still the joy to slake
From Old-World beauty. Till we sculptors
stand
Supreme World-life within our pulseless hand!

Think, lad, when father's little ones shall tell
How Greeks saw, felt, and struggled, conquered, fell!

Fear not, Pæonius, our spirits win
Out of this age to call all ages kin.

(PHIDIAS, *sighing as one relieved of a burden, pauses awhile, then writes a few more lines.*)

Smile not upon this, friend—All fancy—
Yea!

But, by the Etruscans, gone but yesterday
To Italy, and now established there;
By Dorians, building temples by the fair
Purple Tyrennian, so I think
Greek soul o'erflows, as over fountain-brink,
And that we circle out and out, our creed
Begetting world-dream for an unborn breed,
Ardent posterities!—Thus do I then
Bid now farewell to my own race of men!
And for a future permanence, new clime,
Lift statues in the peristyles of Time
And trust my message, where that message
seeks

Its own fulfillment. Hail to the happy Greeks
Hail to that Race; keen, wistful, passionate,
That shall know Greece, Athens, the gods, the,
State!

(*The paper hangs listlessly in the hand of
PHIDIAS, who sits in revery, lost to all around
him.*)

JAILER (*entering*). Rise! thou infamous sculptor!
A decree!

Follow! Thy haughty judges have demanded
thee!

(PHIDIAS *wearily rising, stares stupidly at him, then looks up to the little window where the CRICKET perched and makes a slight gesture of salute and farewell.*)

PHIDIAS. "So be it."

(*Hastily aside.*) See this coin? Of all good
fees

The best, with head of high Themistocles—
Thine—if thy hand this simple scroll wilt bear
To the great sculptor at Olympia.

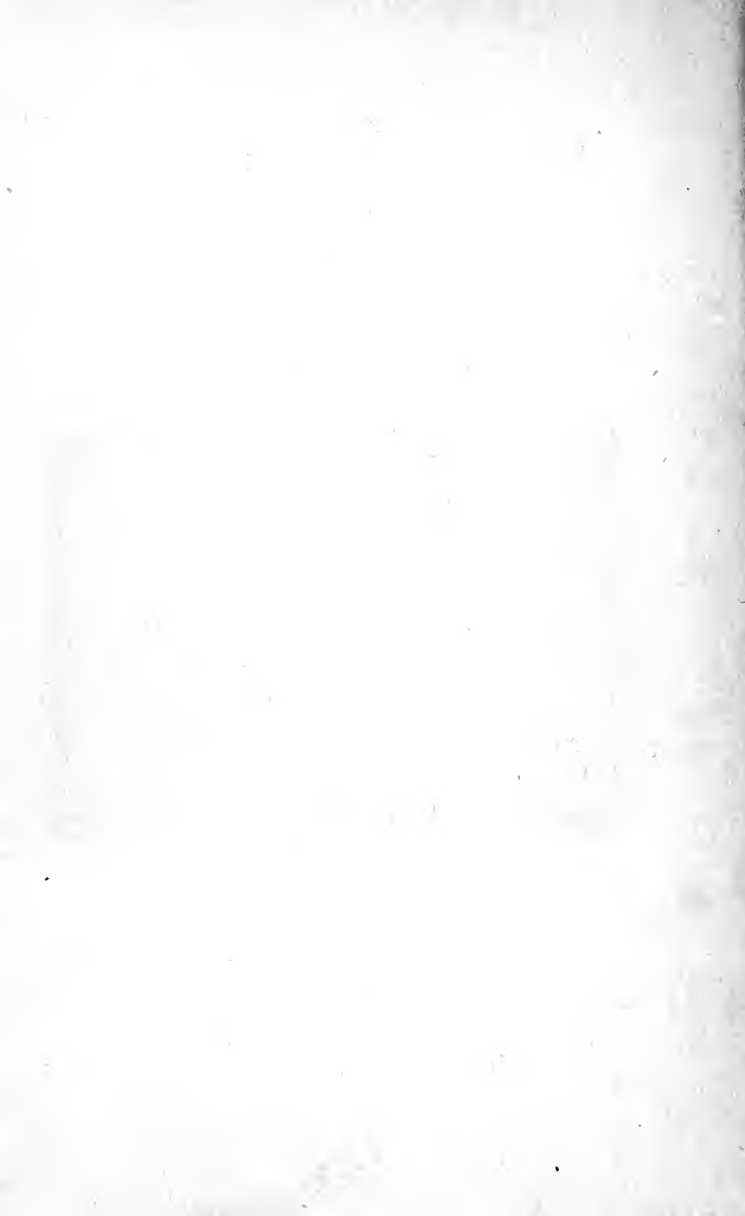
To give to him my farewell words and tears,
(*The Sculptor pauses, looking unseeingly at the JAILER and adding softly.*) As I pass
outward—down the faithful years!

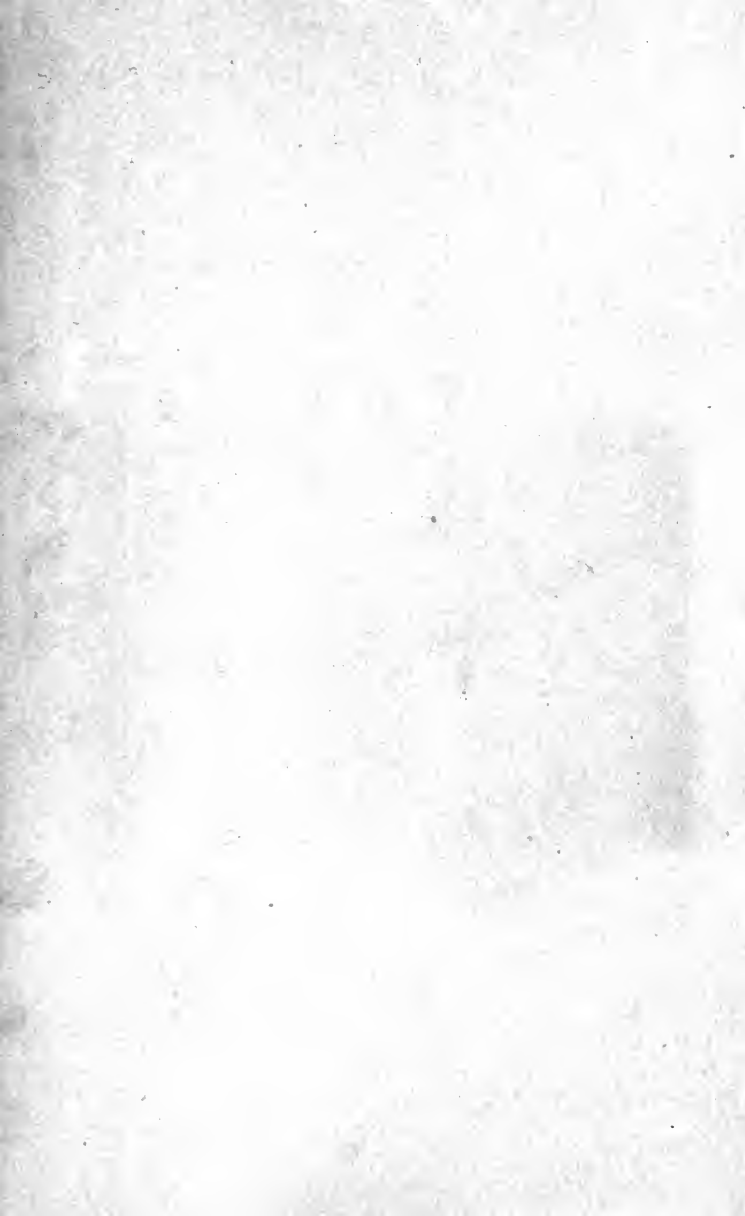
EPILOGUE

As children keep
Some spiraled shell or crystal crusted stone
For wonder and for solace, when alone
They fall asleep,

So do I soft caress
And guard through days of World-dark such a
charm
And cherish from indifference and harm
One loveliness.

And every Grecian vase
And sculptured fragment to my eyes doth mean
Life, calm and balanced, simple, and serene,
Transcending Race!





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